

HR Weekly Podcast

09-24-2014

Today is September 24, 2014, and welcome to the HR weekly podcast from the State Human Resources Division. Today's topic concerns the settlement of an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or EEOC, retaliation lawsuit.

Mary Goulet worked as a manager for Goodwill Industries in Lawton, Oklahoma, for 13 years. On June 16, 2010, she was terminated from her position at Goodwill because of her testimony during a federal age and sex discrimination lawsuit filed by another Goodwill employee. Goulet's testimony was unfavorable to Goodwill.

The EEOC filed a lawsuit in a federal district court stating that Goodwill violated federal law when it terminated Goulet in retaliation for providing testimony in a co-worker's discrimination lawsuit. It is illegal under both Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act to discriminate against an employee for participating as a witness in another person's employment discrimination lawsuit.

In July 2014, EEOC announced that Judge Timothy D. DeGiusti approved a consent decree settling the lawsuit against Goodwill. The settlement provides for "injunctive relief designed to prevent future discrimination, including notification to employees, revision and dissemination of anti-discrimination policies, and live training on anti-retaliation law, in addition." Also,, Goodwill will pay a monetary award of \$100,000.

Senior Trial Attorney, Jeff Lee, with the EEOC states: "Our employment discrimination laws depend on the ability of witnesses to freely provide information to the courts and to the EEOC. American jurisprudence is based on that principle. The EEOC will do whatever is necessary to ensure that witnesses can be confident that when they testify in employment discrimination proceedings, there will be no reprisals against them."

If you have a question about this topic, please contact your HR Consultant at 803-896-5300. Thank you.